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PREFACE.

IN the following pages I have endeavored to give my strongest reasons for believing in the Catholic religion, and I hope that my non-Catholic readers will not be less inclined to weigh my arguments because I claim that certainty is attainable in religion.

Naturally speaking, nothing in religion irritates us so much as the idea of certainty; even the Ipse dixits of God Himself stir the old Adam in us to revolt. And when God chooses to have a human representative to declare them, it becomes still more aggravating.

But, dear reader, if you only view the matter calmly you will see that there is in such a dispensation a Divine condescension which greatly honors us, His creatures, and makes His message all the easier to be understood and obeyed because the man who announces it has received it from a divinely established authority and has to obey it himself more submissively than others, and has often to suffer the imputation of being dictatorial above all other men, whereas in real-

CERTAINTY IN RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST PRINCIPLES.

As the title of my book indicates, I claim that there is a possibility of arriving at certainty in knowledge. By this statement I wish to be understood as meaning that certainty is attainable in all knowledge but only so far as it is required for our well-being and happiness. It must not be supposed, however, that we can arrive at certainty in everything; if we could, we should be omniscient; we have therefore to be satisfied with that degree of knowledge which is attainable by the right use of our limited faculty of understanding.

But if, on the contrary, it were not in our power to discern truths within the limits prescribed by our reason, it would be useless for us to think about, or to compare, systems of thought and religion. Practically, however, as we know, a universal sceptic does not exist, and if theoretically one could be found, it would be hopeless to try to convince him of the truth of anything;

yet, strange as it may seem, there have been so-called philosophers, who have claimed universal doubt as their starting-point, but they have invariably contradicted their first principles every hour of their lives.

The highest act of which the mind of man is capable, must be necessarily an act of his mind in reference to God, and his relation to God or religion, because God is the highest Being he can possibly conceive.

We were brought into existence without being consulted, and in a state of dependence; hence we have to look to the Author of our being for knowledge of our nature, the meaning of our existence, and our destiny. We can know that there is a God because we can see the things He has made. The fact of a creation by an Omnipotent Being is, therefore, taught us by reason, because a chain of finite causes presupposes a self-sustaining and all-controlling Power which has formed it and which keeps it in existence.

What are called secondary or created causes do not of themselves reasonably account for the existence of anything, because they are limited and dependent. In the last analysis, therefore, we find that an Infinite Creator must exist, or there could be no finite existences. Furthermore, the ultimate or final cause precludes the possibil-

ity of anything else being eternal; hence, we conclude that everything else that does exist must have been created or produced out of nothing. A secondary cause plainly cannot produce anything greater than itself. For this reason Evolution cannot explain the origin of things. Creation is the only complete rational explanation of the origin of the universe. From these principles the wisest of philosophers have demonstrated the origin of all finite things by the creative act of God, and from them Brownson thus concludes that the theory of Evolution is unscientific: "The very idea of evolution presupposes something already in existence. Where did that something from which other things were evolved come from? There must have been a first cause which produced it, which means a Creator. Again, the medium of power which could cause a lower species to become a higher, would have to be a Creator just as much as the Cause which produced something out of nothing, and finally, just as there would have to be a something before evolution could begin to operate, so there would have to be an end where the process would have to stop. When perfection was reached there could be no further evolution. What power could set this limit of perfection except an all-perfect Cause? So, for these three reasons,

I do not see how either the production, or development, or completion of anything finite, could be possible without an Omniscient Creator."

The doctrine of Divine Revelation concerning the origin of the human family, and its moral and spiritual condition, is therefore in perfect harmony with everything that reason can teach us on the subject. Take, for instance, the question of the fall of man from his ideal state. Have we not evidence in ourselves that we are weak and easily inclined to evil? We were born so. But how did the human race come to have this misfortune? Is it reasonable to suppose that an all-perfect Supreme Being made us that way in the beginning? No. Philosophically it is impossible to suppose that any sin or imperfection to which we are subject is due to any cause, except human free will. The actual sin of progenitors is the only rational explanation of the tendency to sin in the offspring.

Again, the doctrine of the descent of the whole human family from a single pair best explains the physical and moral unity of our race. It would be far more difficult to suppose that the first man, for instance, came into existence as an infant, or was evolved from a supersentient brute, than that a perfectly rational male and female, from whom our whole race has descended,

as men are now born, were created in the beginning. To the practical-minded man, therefore, it seems to me, that any theory which claims to explain the origin and condition of man in a different way only confuses and makes complex what reason and common sense show to be very clear and simple. If the old heathen philosophers who discussed this question had been told that there was an Omnipotent Being who created, first, a man and a woman from whom the whole human race has descended, as we know children are now born of parents, most probably they would have considered the solution of the problem of the origin of our race complete.

As a historical fact, however, it was in the second century after our Lord's birth that a system of intellectual philosophy in harmony with the Divine Revelation was formed. It has since, generally speaking, held ascendancy over all other schools of thought in the intellectual world. Though the sources of natural truth are distinct from those of revealed truth, the effect of the latter has been to widen, systematize, and harmonize the former. History shows, on the other hand, how often the most absurd theories in human philosophy have arisen from those who either knew not, or neglected, the teachings of revelation.

CHAPTER II.

THE HIGHER KNOWLEDGE.

Man, created by God out of nothing, has received from his Creator all that he is and all that he has; he depends upon God for every moment of his existence, and the Divine concurrence is necessary for every one of his acts. It is evident, therefore, that inasmuch as man belongs wholly to God, he is bound to obey the laws of nature which the Author of his being has established by the act of creating him.

So far the claims of simply human reason have been considered; now we shall consider the claims of the Superior Power, for there is an antecedent probability, based upon arguments convincing to natural reason, that God would make a revelation of His will to man. If such a revelation really exists, the fact can surely be ascertained with the same certainty which we have of other facts which depend upon reliable testimony, such as the incontestable facts of history. Yet it must always be remembered that while some of the facts and truths of religion can be ascertained by reason, the very idea of revelation itself requires that a higher assent be

given to it than that which is given to reason alone.

Revelation is a supernatural gift from God, who, in giving it, speaks in His own name, and with His own authority, hence the motive, as well as the nature of the higher assent to it, must be supernatural.

As Father Tyrrell says: "The mere reasonableness of believing cannot stir the will to actual belief." Thus the motive of faith, strictly speaking, is not found in the human reasons for what it teaches, but in the authority and veracity of God who speaks it. Natural proofs are a preparation for the assent of faith, but there is no greater error than to suppose that supernatural faith is the mere result of reasoning upon even Christian evidences. For the right understanding of the relations between natural and supernatural knowledge, we must always bear in mind their totally distinct spheres. We do not mean by this that many of the same truths may not belong to both spheres, but that, if God has made a revelation, it must also contain some truths which are above and unattainable by mere human reason; otherwise there would be no need of revelation. Unfortunately this principle has been lost sight of by many; they have assumed that reason and revelation are on an equality, that

theology and philosophy should be treated in the same manner, and hence they have fallen into the deepest errors. Although reason in its sphere of purely natural knowledge is infallible, it has no right to so intrude itself into the sphere of supernatural knowledge as to claim the power of judging, by itself alone, what is true or false in revelation.

In treating this subject of the relation of reason to faith, we must follow the two principles, that faith must interpret revelation, and that reason must guide us in human science. On this basis there can be no possible conflict between faith and reason, but an analogy such that the right understanding of the one leads to the true knowledge of the other.

As an all-perfect God must have created man perfect in the beginning, so to understand man's present condition, and the natural and supernatural endowments which he possesses, we must know that he received the gift of revelation in the beginning; otherwise, the sin which caused the fall would not have led to such consequences as have followed since he has lived upon the earth. The fundamental idea underlying revelation is restoration, salvation, or redemption, which means that by it the effects of sin are obliterated. The reproach of God to man after his

fall, and the promise of redemption made to him, as we shall show later, prove that revelation is as old as creation, and that, if to-day God speaks to us through faith, His message is the continuation of the Word which He spoke to our first parents. Religion is as old as the history of man, and the faith of to-day cannot be separated from that which was revealed in the beginning of the human race. In a word, the distinction between God's revealed religion and all other forms of religious belief is marked unmistakably by its continuity from the beginning of human existence on earth.

If it can be shown that a religion has always been man's possession, it is one of the strongest proofs of its truth. But on the other hand, if a religion can be shown to have originated since man was created, it is a *prima facie* evidence that it was not revealed by God. However, in determining the connection between the faith of to-day and that of the first age, we must study the origin and development of religious belief during the whole period of human history.

Authority, as unmistakable as reason itself, is, as we have shown, an essential characteristic of revelation made to man by the Author of his reason. Now, the fact that there is only one religious faith in the world to-day which does

speak authoritatively, and has always thus spoken since it was established, is of itself an incontestable proof that, if God has made a revelation, its claim alone is valid. Again, if God has made such a revelation, it must be so clear that no one can reasonably dispute the fact. Religion concerns us more deeply than any other matter can; it imparts a knowledge more necessary for us to possess than the sum of all natural knowledge. Hence, we must conclude that the Author of revelation has provided a means by which we may know with certainty what we must believe and do in order to be saved.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRIMITIVE REVELATION.

First of all, God revealed Himself to man by creating him, for a rational and moral being could not have been brought into existence in a state of probation without knowing the Author of his being. This puts the basis of religion on a sure footing. Religious truth was by the first man apprehended immediately, and its expression was reduced to the simple truth, *God is;* whereas the later formula, "there is but one God," elaborated by the process of reasoning, is a manifestation of the obscurity in faith consequent upon the fall, and is but a faint echo of the wonderful knowledge which had been so bountifully bestowed on the first man. This dim knowledge man has transmitted to his posterity.

To the question: Why natural truths, discernible by reason, should also be subject-matter of faith? it may be answered that, if it were otherwise, the knowledge of them would be confined to the limited number of highly intellectual and moral men, as the history of philosophy among the heathen shows; whereas, through faith, the knowledge of God is made the possible universal

inheritance of mankind. Yet, as we know, ignorance and moral depravity have so darkened the reason and conscience of multitudes of men, that but for the omnipotence and mercy of God in perpetuating this truth among chosen souls, all traces of it might practically have been lost.

The primitive religion given to our first parents, inasmuch as they were perfect, must have contained truths surpassing those attainable by reason, because such truths are now taught by God to man in his fallen state. Revealed religion was preserved during the earliest periods of man's history after the fall by two agencies: first, reason and conscience, which taught the existence of God and the precepts of the natural law; and secondly, tradition, by which the revealed law of God was transmitted from generation to generation. Unfortunately, however, the increasing prevalence of sin caused the knowledge of the natural law to become more and more obscured and changed, and also corrupted the belief in the divine tradition of revealed truths and precepts; yet it is a significant fact, that even the lowest varieties of false religion claim to have been based on revelation. The idea of revelation has always been co-extensive with that of religion.

The history of all religions further shows that

their universal truths have emanated from a common source, although many of them cannot give a credible account of their origin. The false, superstitious mythologies of the heathen presuppose a true supernatural origin for the primitive religious belief of mankind. The idea of God must have existed in the minds of men before they worshipped idols as gods; the degenerate idea of a plurality of gods indicates the original knowledge of the attributes that belong to divinity. The numerous modern false systems of belief also imply that religion is a revealed and God-given system of doctrines and precepts authoritatively taught, and not a mere group of abstract ideas. It was not necessary for Adam to develop his faculties before he could receive the Divine message, because he never was a child.

But how differently has God taught man since he has fallen, and has had to have his faculties trained from infancy. In man's present condition the traditional element necessarily enters into his religious education, as does imparted knowledge in all other matters. It is therefore certain, as we know by experience, that no intellectual or moral growth is possible to us without external authority and influence. It does not follow from this that man's mind is by nature a mere blank.

One might as well suppose that the soil of the earth which brings forth fruit and grain and is carpeted with verdure is naturally a mere barren waste. The soil and the seed are both primarily necessary for vegetable life, which is, however, greatly enhanced by the industry of man. Just so, rational and traditional knowledge coalesce in producing the wisdom of mankind.

There must be an object to which the faculty of understanding corresponds. If we desire to know God's will there must be some way in which our desire can be satisfied. Religion alone can supply this want. Without it, the spiritual life of the soul would be as impossible as the life of a body with an appetite for which nature had provided no food.

Religious development, as we know its history, would be unintelligible, unless its Author were the all-ruling Providence. It reveals a Divine purpose as much as the visible world—and the more it is studied, the more clearly is this purpose discerned. The argument used by Newman, in his "Essay on Development," to establish the identity of the modern Catholic Church with the Church of the early centuries, might be applied with equal force to establish the identity of the authoritative Church of to-day with the primitive religion of the first man, and nothing can be more

illogical than the attempt of unbelievers to break this chain.

The inspired law-giver of Israel established his claim as a messenger of God by connecting his law with the revelation given to man in the beginning. To make his religious system intelligible and complete he had to begin with the Genesis of revelation. It would have been vain for him to have claimed that God had spoken to him, unless He had also spoken just as authoritatively to Adam. We conclude, therefore, that Divine commands, prophecies, and the final message of the Messiah to all mankind must constitute the whole of Divine revelation, to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken away by man.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INSPIRED WORD.

The opening book of the Bible is called Genesis, or Beginning, and its contents show that this title belongs to it in a sense in which it can be applied to no other book, since it contains the only consecutive record we have of history from the beginning of the world down to the time of the first patriarch of the Jews. The chief claim for the authenticity of this book, as well as of the other sacred books, which the Christian Church teaches us "were Divinely inspired in all their parts so as to have God for their Author," is, that they have always been so received since they were written.

If these books had at any time been without authority in the Church, or if they had been brought to light recently by discovery amid ancient ruins, they might well be treated as archæologists treat other ancient documents exhumed from the accumulated dust of past ages. But to take the Bible, one of the oldest written documents that exists, and one that always has been and is now an authoritative source of religious

truth in a living human society, and to pretend to interpret it in a way different from the traditional way constantly adhered to by the living organization which originally received it, and today affirms its authority and teaching as unmistakably as when it was first written, is certainly to refuse it that consideration which it deserves; for it is now, as it has always been, a living book.

We should, therefore, study the Bible in the light with which it has always been surrounded. If it had not always had its own living Interpreter, the case would be different. As it is, however, when viewed from the standpoint of the authority which claims it as its own, we behold in it and the Church which possesses it a phenomenon which may well be called a standing miracle.

It is beyond doubt that the traditional view of Holy Scripture, which has just been set forth, goes back continuously to the time of its authorship, and this fact alone gives it an authenticity which can be claimed for no other book that has come down to us. What, for example, in secular history so clearly reveals the life of a nation as the code of laws which it has put into practice ever since its existence? Who can interpret the laws of a nation so well as its own judges and jurists? If this be true in a merely human society,

now much more weight must this argument have in a society which claims to have been established by God Himself for the enforcement of laws declared by the Divine Author to be as unchangeable as Himself. The truth of the traditional interpretation of Holy Scripture is still further manifested by the fact that the Divine law revealed in it cannot be changed or amended by Church authority. The Ten Commandments for instance, with the exception of the third, would lose their entire force if they could be thus modified, and then religion instead of being what it has always been, and must ever be to its followers, the revealed Word of God, would by such a change be reduced merely to a convenient human policy for the maintenance of social order.

While it is strictly true that an authoritative religion necessarily accredits itself, and is the best witness of the truth of its own teaching, it must also be admitted that it has in addition well-known credentials outside of itself which show most clearly the existence of its historical claim. The Samaritans for instance preserved and acknowledged the authenticity of the Pentateuch which was given before they separated from those who had inherited the Divine promise of giving birth through their lineal descendants to the coming Messiah. A number of writers

among the heathen nations of antiquity also admitted the claim of the possession of these laws and promises by the Jews.

On the whole our contention is simply this, that Holy Scripture possesses such an incontestable authority, that all historical certainty would be shattered if the truth of these documents could be disproved.

CHAPTER V.

PROPHECIES AND THEIR FULFILMENT.

Prophecy may be defined as the certain prediction of a future event which cannot be known through its natural causes to any created intelligence. Of all forms of revelation there is none more manifestly Divine than an evidently fulfilled prophecy of this kind. But if the prophecy of such an event and its fulfilment, even if it be only natural, is Divine, how much more so is it if the occurrence be wholly miraculous? Indeed, creation itself does not bear the mark of its Divine Author more clearly than a miraculous event of this order unconditionally foretold, and afterwards absolutely verified, such as the Coming of Jesus Christ. Such a manifestation of Divine power is still more convincing, when both the prediction and the event make known a supernatural means by which grace and salvation are to come to all mankind.

The prophecies now to be considered are of this character. The very first prophecy of Holy Scripture exemplifies it. It was spoken by God, as we read, to Satan in these words: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy

seed and her seed, she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (Genesis iii. 15). It is an offer of salvation made to the head of the human family and his posterity after he had involved himself and them in a common ruin of sin, and did not know how to hide his sin and remorse. This is too wonderful an idea to have ever been conceived if it were not true. But as a matter of fact it inspired the only hope which has since made man's existence on earth tolerable. It may, perhaps, have prevented the suicide of our first parents, and the extinction of the whole human race. As it is, happily our first parents overcame the worst remorse ever experienced by human beings; since that time the ravages of death have been repaired by innumerable new-born generations, and the world has had a history, because these words of hope were spoken to them, the authors of guilt. As a consequence, a state of probation has been, as we see, tolerable even to the worst reprobates who have ever lived; it is of itself so merciful a provision that, as we know, worldlings are willing to hold on to it as long as possible, even after all hope of eternal salvation has died in their hearts. Industry has made the earth fruitful, ambition has developed empires, mind has triumphed over matter, and love has enkindled devotion, because of this promise; it has been to

our race really the only sure antidote against the poison of despair. It has nerved man in the struggle for existence, and has outlined and planned all the battles that have ever been fought between good and evil. It has been the keynote of faith, the foundation of hope, and the root of charity. Even rationalists and agnostics have unconsciously lived under and followed its inspiration. It is the one truth in primitive revelation which has never been lost, for it has not only been perpetuated by tradition, but has become embedded in the consciousness of every mind and heart. Probation is the basis upon which all human conceptions of morality rest; indeed, but for it the ideas of responsibility and accountability would never have been conceived.

What a valiant contest it sets forth, what a triumph it bespeaks for willing and generous souls! The head of the serpent is to be crushed, and the serpent, though he may do his utmost, can only lie in wait for his opponent's heel. "O happy fault which has merited to have so great a redemption."

Now, such a prophecy can only be rightly understood as applying to a Person who was to come, because it was uttered against a being who was to keep up the contest; indeed, if it were only a vague, abstract principle, it would never have lived on in an organized Church nor have

inspired constant Divine worship on account of a Redeemer to come. And the book in which it is recorded shows that those who received it transmitted it to others, who in consequence outwardly worshipped the One who was to come by sacrificial offerings.

To be fully understood, this prophecy must be connected with the events and prophecies of later ages. When the world had well-nigh forgotten its spiritual significance, and had perished because of sin in the waters of the deluge, with the exception of a single family who were miraculously saved, this ancient hope was afterwards revived more strongly than ever by the Divine promise, never again to punish in such a manner the unhappy children of men. Later another prophecy was made still more clearly of a person who was to come, in the special call of Abraham, and the forming of a nation in his posterity to be called God's chosen people, through whose kindred all nations were to be blessed (Genesis xii. 3; Numbers xxiv. 17), and also by a more definite prophecy which even designated the tribe among the chosen people from which was to be sent the One who was to be "the Expectation of all nations" (Genesis xlix. 10).

The most remarkable feature of the Messianic prophecies is that faith in their fulfilment constantly increased with the lapse of ages, until at

length the mysterious Deliverer of mankind was designated in prophecy, as One to be born of a Virgin, to be called Emmanuel (Isaiah vii. 14), and here we must add the other prophetic titles, "Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, Father of the world to come, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah ix. 6), which actually form a climax in the development of the Messianic idea. That there might be no mistake as to the one who was designated, and that the time of preparation for His coming might be improved, His birth-place (Micheas v. 2), and the time of His coming (Genesis xlix. 10; Daniel ix. 24-27), were expressly indicated so that error as to the Person of the Messiah became impossible.

Furthermore, the principal events connected with His life were just as plainly foretold: His mission, His miracles, His rejection by the Jews, His Passion and Death, His glorious Resurrection from the dead, were so clearly manifested, that, humanly speaking, it would have been impossible for the prophecies concerning them to have been written so many centuries beforehand without having been revealed by the Omniscient God. Continuity is, as we have shown, the one mark by which Divine revelation is distinguished from all merely human tradition, which is dependent upon human fallibility, and this is seen especially in these prophecies. What is so quick-

ly forgotten as a promise, especially if it is to be fulfilled only in the distant future? Enthusiastic but erratic dreamers have, it must be admitted, sometimes temporarily swayed whole nations, but such religious movements have usually been forgotten in a few generations.

That the Messianic promises and prophecies did not come to naught, can be reasonably explained only on the ground that they were Divine. To the carnal-minded the promise of a future prophet or saint who would in the last days recall wayward children to the service and love of the God of their fathers, whom they were then rejecting, was not a thing calculated to inspire persevering faith and effort. The history of the chosen people does not show that they were organized and kept together by unallowed faith in their Divine vocation, or unflagging zeal in following it out. On the contrary, their hard-hearted and stiff-necked obstinacy in resisting the will of God, and notwithstanding this their continuity in His service are the hardest of all things in their history to explain without supernatural agency.

The constant growth and development of a Messianic idea among the Jews, so opposed to their natural inclination, evidently contradicts all the principles and laws ascribed to evolution.

CHAPTER VI.

PROPHECIES AND THEIR FULFILMENT.—CONTINUED.

If the events narrated in the New Testament concerning Jesus Christ are not a fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies recorded in the Old Testament, how are they to be explained in reference to them, and how is the origin of those prophecies to be even plausibly accounted for? They were certainly not spontaneous manifestations of Jewish genius and natural trend of thought and action. Human motives suggest no reason why the Jews of the Old Testament should have invented an ideal Messiah so opposed to all their national ideals. Neither can human motives explain why the Jews of the New Testament rejected Him more vehemently than all other peoples, and became forever stigmatized before the world as a deicide nation. Their attitude in Gospel history surely does not indicate that they were trying to establish a fictitious fulfilment of the prophecies of the Mosaic dispensation in Jesus Christ, but the very opposite of this. The Jews evidently were not anxious at that time

to verify the sorrowful words of Isaiah and Jeremias concerning the Messiah promised to their ancestors.

Much less can we suppose that the Apostles and the Christian Church of the first centuries learned from the Jews how to construct a harmony between the Christ of prophecy and the actual Jesus Christ, for the Jews, as we know, tried hard to prevent any such adjustment of Christ's teaching with their laws and traditions. In fact, religious truth has never at any time been man's natural first love, for whatever he has of it has, generally speaking, come to him like the lightning, the tempest, and the earthquake, unbidden and unwelcomed. He surely never of his own accord constructed a pathway to the kingdom of God through tribulations. It is only after sorrow has passed that man realizes its chastening and salutary effects.

The prophecies of the Old Testament when first unfolded to the Jews produced, as history shows, spiritual effects similar to those produced by the preaching of the Apostles. So we conclude that prophecy and fulfilment are not artificial and fictitious adjustments invented by man to prevent the Almighty from failing to keep His word.

The last line of the Old Testament was writ-

ten about two hundred years before the birth of Christ, during which period occurred some of the most tragic revolutions in all Jewish history, and the ideal Messiah in the minds of the Jews then became the opposite of that manifested in the Divine prophecies. The old law and the prophets had gradually come to be regarded by the majority of the Jews as indifferently as they are to-day by our modern higher critics. The spiritual power and glory described by the old prophets as belonging to the Messianic Kingdom were, in accordance with the spirit of that age, metamorphosed into the idea of a new Solomon who was to establish Jewish imperialism over the whole world. Such ideas were then as popular as are those of the rationalistic preachers of progress of to-day. But to men who are in earnest and who seriously desire to know the truth, even if they have to fear and tremble at its announcement, as did the children of Israel of old at the foot of Mount Sinai, when "all the Mount was terrible," the words of Jesus Christ portend such woe to unbelievers and to perverters of the truth, that they desire to know and are willing to follow the truth at any cost.

The truth has never been favored, and much less propagated by designing men; while, on the other hand, error has often been clothed with all

the plausibility that human cunning could devise. The impossibility of ascribing to any human cause the agreement which is found between the historical Christ and the Messiah of prophecy, is proved by the fact that we have to-day copies of manuscripts of the Old Testament which do not essentially differ from those known to have been in existence long before the time of Christ. All the manuscripts of the New Testament, though obtained from different churches widely separated, are so similar, that they must have been copied from one original document. Besides, in each one of the four Gospels there are differences which show that the writers of them never could have combined to establish harmony between them, but that each was so convinced of the truth that further testimony was not required. In fact, each one of them bears the marks of a sincerity and truthfulness to be found in no other books that have been transmitted to posterity. The Acts of the Apostles, also, shows the same characteristics that we find in the third Gospel. The Apocalypse, the Epistles of St. John, harmonize with the teachings of the Gospel which bears his name. The other Epistles of the New Testament show just as plainly that their writers teach only what they learned from Jesus Christ.

We have seen how faithfully Jesus Christ fulfilled in His Person the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, and we find still further proof of His Divine mission in the predictions which He himself uttered, and which, as events that followed show, were fulfilled. He foretold definitely that He would be betrayed to the chief priests, that they would condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles, who would mock Him, spit on Him, scourge Him, and kill Him, and that He would rise again on the third day (St. Mark ix. 9; St. Matthew xvii.9). And the prophecy of His Resurrection was so well understood, even by His enemies, that they took the precaution to seal His tomb and place guards about it to try to prevent its fulfilment.

He also foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish people, which are facts verified by contemporary history, and may be read clearly in the ruins which remain in the Holy City to-day. The prophecy of Christ that the temple would be so completely destroyed that not a stone would be left upon a stone, has been literally fulfilled; and this by the efforts of the apostate Emperor, Julian, who in endeavoring to overthrow it by rebuilding the temple, only made its verification absolutely complete by digging away the old foundations for the pur-

pose of laying a new one for the temple which he vainly proposed to build. This is a fact of history, which even the rationalist Gibbon admits that he is forced to acknowledge.

Again, the dispersion of the Jews throughout the world, and their continual existence as a race apart from all other ancient peoples, by a singular exception to the law of history constitutes a perpetual witness of the fulfilment of Christ's prophecy concerning them; their persistent unbelief shows that the curse of Christ's Blood, which they prayed might fall upon them and their children, has been answered. And although they have been the constant prey of the nations which have unjustly persecuted them, they are probably still preserved by God's mercy for the future fulfilment of a divine prophecy of their ultimate restoration to the favor of God.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

The question, who was Jesus Christ? lies at the very root of Christianity. To the vast majority of men the truth or falsity of that religion depends upon the answer which is given to this question. If He was a Divine Person, all must admit that His religion is true; if He was only a man, it, as interpreted by the vast majority of Christians, cannot fairly claim to be anything short of the most false and idolatrous superstition ever known to man.

I now propose to consider briefly the principal proofs by which the truth of the doctrine of Christ's divinity may be established. But before doing so I wish to remark that it is commonly admitted by the majority of those who have carefully studied Christ's life and character, that He was the greatest Person who has ever appeared on earth; that He has taught the world more religious knowledge than it has ever learned from any other source, and from all other sources put together. Now, if this general admission concerning Him be granted, without doubt His own testimony concerning Himself is of the first importance. What is this testimony?

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He declares: "I and the Father are one" (St. John x. 30). When Philip said to Him: "Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us" (St. John xiv. 8, *et seq.*) Christ answered: "Have I been so long a time with you and have you not known Me, Philip? He that seeth Me, seeth the Father also. How sayest thou, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?"

When He was asked by the Jews, if He was greater than Abraham, the father of their nation, He answered: "Before Abraham was made, I am" (St. John viii. 58). How could Christ have declared Himself to have been before the creation of Abraham unless He were more than man?

In another place Christ made known who He was, and why He came into the world, in these never to be forgotten words: "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (St. John iii. 16). Here He calls Himself the Son of God, but not in the same sense in which other men are called the sons of God, but the *only-begotten* Son of God. And if we connect with this sublime declaration of truth the commission which He gave to His Apostles, to baptize men in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,

the greatness and power of His Eternal Sonship is set forth so unmistakably, that it is impossible to doubt His meaning.

This doctrine is further confirmed by the testimony of His Apostles, which He Himself brought out by asking them, "Whom do you say that I am?" St. Peter replied: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," and for this profession of faith Christ commended him, saying: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed this to thee, but My Father who is in heaven" (St. Matthew xvi. 16-17), which is equivalent to saying, this is not a human doctrine, but a doctrine of divine revelation.

The Gospel of St. John from beginning to end manifests most clearly the object and purpose of its author, which was, as he explicitly says, "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (St. John xx. 31). In the first eighteen verses of the opening chapter of this, the most sublime and perfect composition to be found in the whole range of literature, we have a brief and explicit summary of its whole contents, namely, that the Eternal Word who is the Cause of all things became Flesh, and was manifested among men, and that some would reject,

while others would receive Him. And that the One whom St. John describes as the Word, was a personal Being, the following passage proves beyond question: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was made nothing that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness did not comprehend it. . . . That was the true Light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name. Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us (and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (St. John i. 1-14).

The account which St. John gives us of the removal of doubt concerning the resurrection of Christ from the mind of the Apostle St. Thomas,

by the touching of the marks of the wounds in His risen body, emphasizes the great truth which his Gospel inculcates throughout—the Divinity of Jesus Christ, for St. Thomas's profession of faith in the fact of the resurrection was a simple confession of Christ's divinity: "My Lord and My God!"

Finally I may add the testimony of St. Paul, which is even more convincing: "For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names. That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 5-11). "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins; who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. For in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominations,

or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and in Him. And He is before all, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He may hold the primacy. Because in Him it hath well pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, making peace through the blood of His cross, both as to the things that are on the earth, and the things that are in heaven" (Col. i. 14-20). "In these days (God) hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world. Who being the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels hath He said at any time: 'Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee.' And again: 'I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son.' . . . And let all the Angels of God adore Him. . . . But to the Son (He saith): 'Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever'" (Heb. i. 2-8).

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.—CONTINUED

Even Christ's enemies showed that they interpreted His testimony concerning Himself as His disciples did, for when He declared that He existed before Abraham, "they took up stones to cast at Him" (St. John viii. 59). Also when He declared: "I and the Father are one. The Jews then took up stones to stone Him. But Jesus answered them: Many good works I have showed you from My Father; for which of those works do you stone Me? The Jews answered Him: For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God. . . . Do you say of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world: Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though you will not believe Me, believe the works; that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father" (St. John x. 30-38).

We also read that the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He said God was His

Father, making Himself equal to God (St. John v. 18). Evidently they understood that He could not say God was His Father, in the sense in which He did say it, without making Himself equal to His Father.

Of all the facts recorded in the New Testament there is no one better authenticated and more clearly set forth as a proof of the Divinity of Jesus Christ than that of His Resurrection on the third day from the dead. It also establishes the truth of all that He said and prophesied concerning Himself before His death. In fact it is incontestable that if Jesus Christ returned to life by His own power, He is God; for the Author of life is the only one who can restore it, if it has been destroyed; and that Christ rose from the dead by His own power can be shown by His own words; for He said: "I will lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again" (St. John x. 17-18). How could Christ have asserted that He had such power unless He were God?

If the truth of the Gospels be admitted, the reality of Christ's Resurrection cannot be doubted, for the details of it are so minutely given by the Evangelists that it is impossible to call

it in question. Furthermore, to do this would be to doubt Christ's final commission to His Apostles, which was subsequently, as the later sacred writings show, the cause of the establishment of the Church.

Again, there can be no doubt that the literal resurrection of the actual body of Christ which was taken down from the cross, embalmed and placed in the sepulchre, was meant, and that this was the principal fact upon which the first preachers of Christianity based their appeal to men. As Canon Liddon of the Anglican Church well says: "The denial of the literal Resurrection of the Human Body of Jesus involves nothing else than an absolute and total rejection of Christianity." Indeed, when there was the question of choosing another Apostle to take the place of Judas, the eleven remaining Apostles required that he should be one who had witnessed the life, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts i. 22). And St. Paul declares that "if Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have given testimony against God, that He hath raised up Christ, Whom He hath not raised up" (I. Cor. xv. 14-15).

That by the resurrection is meant the actual

reunion of Christ's Human Soul with His Human Body, and the resuscitation of that Body to a glorified life, is just as explicitly taught by St. Luke and St. John as that He appeared to the disciples after death. At first the Apostles supposed when Christ appeared to them that they saw a spirit "And he said to them: Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? See My hands and feet that it is I Myself; handle and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me have. And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and feet. . . . Have you here, He asked, anything to eat? And they offered Him a piece of a broiled fish and a honeycomb. And when He had eaten before them, taking the remains He gave to them" (St. Luke xxiv. 37-43). Again St. John relates that when Christ appeared to the eleven Apostles, St. Thomas, who had not previously seen the risen Lord, was so doubtful of the fact of the resurrection, that he said: "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe. . . . Then (Jesus) saith to Thomas, put in thy finger hither, and see My hands; and bring hither thy hand and, put it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing.

Thomas answered, and said to Him: My Lord and my God" (St. John xx. 25-28).

The testimonies of the Apostles were corroborated by many others who like them were actual witnesses of the event, as St. Paul affirms, and at the same time he appeals to those of them who were living when he wrote: "For I delivered unto you first of all, which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that He was seen by Cephas; and after that by the eleven. Then was He seen by more than five hundred brethren at once; of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep" (I. Cor. xv. 3-6).

And what is the testimony of later ages? The writings of the earliest Christian Fathers show that they, like the Apostles, adored Christ as God; and, as all of us must admit, the vast majority of Christians have up to the present day believed Him to be God. Now if He were not God, in the interest of truth we might well say it would have been better if He had not come into the world, than that such numbers of His followers should have been so mistaken as to have believed Him to be God. If Christ were not God, we are forced to conclude that He by

His teaching has made most of His followers idolaters.

There are other reasons for believing in Christ's Divinity. One is, that He could not be man's Redeemer if He were not God; for, if He were only a man, what effect could His death have for the remission of sin any more than the death of other just men, such, for instance, as St. John the Baptist? Again His sanctity and works prove Him to have been more than man, because they were the marks by which He accredited Himself to men as their Lord and Master.

Now, if Christ were not really what He claimed to be, we are forced to admit one of two dreadful alternatives: either that He erroneously thought Himself to be God, or that He wished to have His disciples believe that He was God, both of which are too shocking to be even considered by any sincere and devout mind. Furthermore, what could be more unreasonable than to believe that One who taught the world more wisdom than it has even learned from any other source, and all other sources put together, could have been so deluded as to have imagined that He was God, if He was not. And the latter alternative is too awful to be considered for a moment; for even His worst enemies, when He

was upon the earth, did not dare when He challenged them to accuse Him of sin.

Finally, in summing up all the arguments which have been given, including His own testimony concerning Himself (and He was a true and competent witness, if there ever was one among men), the universal testimony of His disciples, and even of some of His greatest enemies, the constant teaching of the Church and the influence of His life, character, and works upon the world, I conclude that it would require more credulity to accept any human theory which could explain away His Divinity than it does divine faith to believe that He was in reality the Eternal Son of God and One with Him.

CHAPTER IX.

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

It was during the forty days that Christ remained on earth after His resurrection that the Apostles received from Him their mission to preach the Gospel to the world. "And Jesus coming, spoke to them saying: All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whotsoever I have commanded you, and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (St. Matthew xxviii. 18-20). And He said to them, " Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (St. Mark xvi. 15). "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this He breathed on them, and said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (St. John xx. 21-23).

Just before He ascended into heaven He said to them: "Stay you in the city, till you be endowed with power from on high" (St. Luke

xxiv. 49). In obedience to this command, St. Luke tells us that, after witnessing His ascension into heaven, they returned to Jerusalem and went into an upper room and were persevering in prayer with their brethren, and that the number of persons there assembled was about one hundred and twenty. During this time they chose by lot St. Matthias who was numbered with the eleven Apostles (Acts i. 26). This retirement of the infant Church from the world continued, as the inspired record shows, until the days of Pentecost were accomplished, ten days after Christ's Ascension into heaven, and fifty days after His Resurrection from the dead.

It is a significant fact that the day on which was commemorated the giving of the Divine Law to Moses on Mount Sinai was the time chosen for the completion of the Christian revelation by the Coming of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles and disciples at Jerusalem. By this coincidence the relation of the New Dispensation to the Old is established, and the time of the cessation of the latter and the beginning of the former are clearly marked. As we have already shown, God has revealed a law to man from the beginning, and not only has this law been always preserved intact, and enforced as a condition of salvation, but even the times and the places of

the revelation have been sacredly commemorated ever since the events by the people of God.

The chain of festivals which extends back from the present time to the Coming of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles and disciples in Jerusalem, and to Moses on Mount Sinai, is as unbroken in the Church as the recurrence of day and night and of the seasons and years in the world's calendar since those remote periods of human history, and this mighty chain of religious commemorations is marred by no missing links. As well might we suppose that old Father Time has forgotten to note the moments that have since passed, and has failed by them to produce growth and decay in our perishable natures, as to think that the Divine Dispensations of law and grace have ever been in abeyance.

Strange, indeed, is the delusion of unbelief! Faith must be a reality, or its commemorations would not be so continuously interwoven with the years of man's existence on the earth.

The promise which Christ made to His Church on the eve of His Ascension, to send the Holy Ghost to complete God's revelation to mankind for all time, was fulfilled on this day. This is the meaning of the Christian Pentecost. The coming of the Holy Ghost was the creation, the enlivement, and the sustaining power of the

Church, which may be defined as a Divinely instituted organism, by which the Holy Ghost perpetually carries on His external mission in the world. On the birthday of the Church three thousand persons were born into her by water and the Holy Ghost. Furthermore, the Apostles, as their Lord had commanded them, continued to preach and to baptize men in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and ever since their day this great work has been carried on by their successors, and, as Christ has so promised, it will never cease to be carried on while the world lasts.

It follows, therefore, from the Divine institution of the Church and of the Sacraments that they are regularly and perpetually established means by which God's grace is given to individual souls, and that consequently they cannot be rejected as unnecessary for salvation.

The key for the solution of the question of the prerogatives given to the Church by its Divine Founder may be found by comparing the Apostolic Church, as we have it described in the New Testament, with the Church existing in later ages. In the Apostolic Church we find the disciples "persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles and in the communication of the breaking of bread and prayers" (Acts ii. 42).

"The doctrine of the Apostles" since Christ had promised that "the Holy Ghost should teach them, and bring to their minds all things whatsoever He had said to them" (St. John xiv. 26), was, unless we deny that the Paraclete was the Spirit of Truth, an unerring rule of faith. What a bond of unity was the doctrine taught by the Apostles to whom Christ had said: "He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me" (St. Luke x. 16).

Now since "the doctrine of the Apostles" is the work of the Holy Ghost who "abides with them forever," as Christ promised He would (St. John xiv. 16), it cannot be doubted that inerrancy was a mark of the Apostolic Church.

Hence, if we desire the same truth to-day it can be obtained only through that Church which received it originally from the Holy Ghost, and in which the Holy Ghost, according to the promise of Christ, abides forever.

The Christianity of Christ, therefore, cannot be in existence to-day if infallibility be wanting. Infallibility can, however, be reached if the truth, as it was taught by the Apostles, is still attainable; otherwise not. Hence it is unquestionable that, unless the promises of Christ have failed, the Apostolic Church has been perpetuated until the present day.

CHAPTER X.

THE IMMEDIATE SUCCESSORS OF THE APOSTLES.

The first links in the chain of Apostolic succession are the ones around which centre the greatest interest in the historical question of the actual continuance by the power of the Holy Ghost of the prerogatives of the Apostolic Church through later ages, and down to the present time.

The method which I shall follow may be compared to that of our great twentieth century railroad constructors, who at first establish a sure basis of operations with which they take care to keep constant unobstructed rail communication, no matter how quickly or how far they may push their lines of extension. My base of construction throughout will be the Apostolic Church, as desribed in the New Testament.

Christianity, as history shows, was propagated and established on a firm footing by those who continued the work of the Apostles after their death. How did they carry on this, the most herculean and enduring work ever undertaken and completed by mortal men? Did they as far as we know, lose any of the vantage ground

gained by the Apostles? Did they succeed in establishing the Church by letting slip from their hands any of the power or privileges conferred upon them by those whom Christ had promised to be with until the consummation of the world? Surely not. We might as well suppose that the builders of our first trans-continental railroad neglected to take advantage of the grants of Congress to further their ambitious project.

Let us examine and see just how St. Clement of Rome, who had been a disciple of Sts. Peter and Paul, St. Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle St. John, and St. Ignatius of Antioch, conducted the affairs of the Church which it had cost the blood of the Apostles and hosts of Christians to establish, and which also cost their own life's blood as well. St. Clement in an epistle to the Corinthians says: "If any disobey the words spoken by God through us let them know that they will entangle themselves in transgression" (Dictionary of Christian Biography by Dr. William Smith and Prof. Wace. "Art. Clemens Romanus"). Again, St. Ignatius in his epistle to the Trallians urges them, "to be subject to the bishop as to the Lord; without the bishop to do nothing"; and in his epistle to the Ephesians he writes: "Wherefore it becomes you to concur in the minds of your bishops, as ye also do. For

your famous presbytery, worthy of God, is knit as closely to the bishop as the strings to the harp" (Epist. ad Eph. chap. iv.) Further evidence of Church unity and authority at this period is not wanting. St. Polycarp wrote to the Philippians that it is needful to abstain from all the impurities "being subject to the presbyters and deacons as unto God and Christ" (Epist. ad Phil. chap. v.)

After the age of the Apostolic Fathers we find indisputable evidence of faith in and the actual exercise of complete Apostolic authority in the Church. St. Irenæus, a disciple of St. Polycarp, teaches that, "we ought not still to seek among others for the truth which it is easy to receive from the Church, seeing that the Apostles most fully committed unto this Church as unto a rich repository all whatsoever is of truth, that every one that willeth may draw out of it the drink of life. For this is the gate of life, but all others are thieves and robbers" (Adv. Haer., lib. III. chap. iv.) Now if Sts. Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp of the apostolic age, and St. Irenæus, their disciple, all agreed on the question of Church authority, and later their successors universally adhered to it, what are we to conclude about its origin? Surely not that it was invented by them, and adopted im-

mediately, without question, by the whole Christian body.

Later Tertullian, Origen, and other authorities among the early Fathers might be cited in favor of this doctrine, and they are so numerous and unanimous that it must be admitted that, if their doctrine be not true, pastors and people in all parts of the world simultaneously—as it were, without knowing it—fell into the same universal error. Cardinal Newman, in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine,* vividly describes the effect which the study of this period of Church history had upon him before his conversion. He says that "if such a system as Protestantism ever existed in early times, it has been clean swept away, as if by a deluge, suddenly, silently, and without memorial; by a deluge coming in a night, and utterly soaking, rotting, heaving up, and hurrying off every vestige of what it found in the Church before cock-crowing; so that when they rose in the morning her true seed were all dead corpses; nay, dead and buried and without grave-stones. The waters went over them, there was not one of them left, they sunk like lead in the mighty waters. Strange antitype, indeed, to the early fortunes of Israel —then the enemy was drowned and Israel saw them dead upon the seashore. But now, it would

seem, water proceeded, as from a flood, out of the serpent's mouth and covered all the witnesses, so that not even their dead bodies lay in the streets of the great city."

According to the Protestant and rationalistic theory of the rise of "error," it immediately entered in and without any opposition possessed the Promised Land. Universality, unity, and stability, the very attributes of a divinely established Church, became the friends and allies of error; while truth, if it appeared at all, gained no disciples and perished; error successfully survived the most terrible war of extermination ever waged against an unarmed and non-resisting society, until finally the dominant civil authority, to save itself from destruction, became its supporter.

What a golden opportunity for the propagation of truth was let slip by the disciples in the first century before episcopacy and unity had been conceived! Had the right moment for them been improved, there would have been no Catholic Church to-day! But, as it is, the modern champion of "truth *versus* ecclesiasticism," starts with a mere theory and holds to it throughout, no matter how many facts, and how many saints and martyrs church history brings to bear against it. Where there are no records, he

theorizes boldly and arrives at indubitable conclusions; if contrary testimonies come in at too early a period, he discards them as spurious without a moment's investigation; if a bishop and martyr of the second century writes that he has learned a different doctrine from authentic tradition, he makes of him an innovator and a liar; he indicts the noble company of the Fathers of the Church as conspirators against truth; he infers that the persecutions of the early ages were endured mainly by knaves; he charges the councils of bishops with having mocked God by pronouncing authoritative anathemas; he excuses, on the plea of self-defence, most acts of violence committed by heretics; he extols as innocent and good nearly every one who was ever put to death for attacks on Holy Church. It is in this way only that he can establish his plea that the first links of church history are broken.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NICENE ERA.

Scarcely had the persecutions against the Church ceased when a new enemy not less dangerous arose within the Church, against the Church herself. An error, which aimed at the destruction of the very foundation of Christianity, had become wide-spread in the principal cities of the East; its author was Arius, who maintained that Jesus Christ was not the Eternal Son of God, but had been created, and was capable of sin. It must not be supposed, however, that his followers saw the consequences of his doctrine as I have stated them; it probably only seemed to some of them that he made clearer and more rational the relation of the Son to the Father. But St. Athanasius, his chief opponent, was happily too thoroughly imbued with the teaching of Holy Scripture and Tradition not to see that such a doctrine was a denial of the Catholic Faith, and by his profound exposition of the truth, and his invincible courage and persevering energy, he succeeded in bringing this heresy to condemnation by the Catholic Church.

If it be marvelous that the Catholic Church

survived the persecutions waged against her from without, it is still more wonderful that she did not succumb to the many assaults made upon her doctrine during this period by those who claimed to be, and bore the name of, Christians; for heresy was then clothed with the panoply of orthodoxy, its followers repeatedly occupied some of the highest patriarchal and episcopal sees in the new Christendom. The Church then was like an army, one half of whose officers and men were traitors, and to distinguish friend from foe was often impossible.

Yet in the end she triumphed without permanently losing a see or permitting a rival church to be established. Humanly speaking, heresy had the advantage and that it did not succeed will ever be one of the strongest evidences that the Church is an institution whose growth and permanency can never be ascribed to mere human agencies. Her triumphs can be properly measured only by her trials, which were manifestly superhuman. In the whole range of human history there is nothing that can be compared with her in power of endurance. So strongly has this fact impressed itself on the minds of all men, that it has become a universal maxim that truth can never be overcome, and on account of it even the most blasphemous heretics have courted per-

secution, in the hope of thus obtaining a wider recognition; but when power has actually laid hold of them, they have invariably yielded to it. For instance, the Mormon Church proclaimed a new revelation abolishing polygamy as soon as the United States government passed and put into force laws prohibiting it.

To be ever victorious is the prerogative of only one institution that has ever existed in the world, and this fact alone is enough to remove from any reasonable mind the possibility of doubting who its Author must be. Alas, that men are so inconsistent and forgetful that we have to argue with them to prove a fact that is as clear as the noon-day sun in the heavens! Who that has ever followed the matchless Newman in his patient and careful study of this period in all its details, does not rejoice at the luminous results it has produced in the minds of students of history for all time. He has well-nigh transformed the opinions of our age on this subject. The Catholic question has by his labors been brought to the front in the English-speaking world. Again, through him, St. Athanasius and the Fathers of Nicæa have become as formidable to the superficial and frivolous advocates of the pandemonium of new creeds, as they were to the vanquished heretics of long-forgotten ages

in the past. Yet he has only presented the history of the fourth century in its true colors, as the following extract from his *Essay on Development* will show: "On the whole, then, we have reason to say that if there be a form of Christianity at this day distinguished for its careful organization and its consequent power; if it is spread over the world; if it is conspicuous for zealous maintenance of its own creed; if it is intolerant towards what it considers error; if it is engaged in ceaseless war with all other bodies called Christian; if it, and it alone, is called 'Catholic' by the world, nay, by those very bodies, and if it makes much of the title; if it names them heretics, and warns them of coming woe, and calls on them one by one to come over to itself, overlooking every other tie; and if they, on the other hand, call it seducer, harlot, apostate, Anti-Christ, devil; if, however, they differ one with another, they consider it their common enemy; if they strive to unite together against it, and cannot; if they are but local; if they continually subdivide and it remains one; if they fall one after another and make way for new sects, and it remains the same, such a form of religion is not unlike the Christianity of the Nicene Era."

The value of this period of history to us is not

to be measured so much by what it defined, as by the evidence which it gives of the power of the Christian Church in conquering error; for the final outcome of the multitudinous and unending discussions on this dogma, was the coining of the one word "consubstantial," which has ever since been, and ever will be, her authoritative expression of the meaning of Christ's words: "I and the Father are One." To interpret is not to add anything to a doctrine, hence to suppose that the Council of Nicæa brought forth anything new in Christianity, is to make the most dangerous mistake by which history was ever falsified. The whole animus of the Nicæan Fathers was opposition to innovation. It was like the attitude of Lord Halifax towards Canon Henson to-day. It was, however, progressive in so far as it pulled down the chief obstacle to the spread of the unchangeable Church in the world.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FIFTH AND SIXTH CENTURIES.

Any one who has studied the philosophy of history at all cannot fail to see that it would be impossible to establish a fictitious identity at all times of a world-wide institution such as the Catholic Church. She has existed during a period of nineteen centuries, in which have occurred probably more changes and revolutions in all other institutions than during the whole previous history of mankind.

The Council of Nicæa gave the death blow to Arianism as a dominant creed, although the civil authority for a long time afterwards kept it alive in some localities and established a strong foothold for it among the recently converted Goths. But as Christian civilization acquired new strength and vigor, under the influence of the Bishops of Rome and succeeding General Councils, it waned more and more.

Arius, though defeated, had set an evil example which was followed by Nestorius and Eutyches, but authoritative Catholic Councils held at Ephesus and Chalcedon anathematized these heresies, and Arianism got the full force of the blows

which fell upon them and was the sooner demolished by their defeat. Every heresy which temporarily succeeds, as history shows, is invariably followed by a multitude of others which soon war upon one another instead of keeping up a hopeless fight against the Mother Church. So true is this that it is a well-known maxim among Catholics, that the wars between sects bring peace to the Church. When once Catholic unity is broken, and the anathema decreed, the unfortunate excommunicates commonly drop all restraint and give full rein to the wild horses which they have mounted. At this stage of their history they usually are so given up to their own devices that they let the Church alone in order to fight and exterminate one another.

Men have become so accustomed to the repeated triumphs and consequent increasing ascendency of the Catholic Church during the ages that they are apt to imagine that it has always had everything in its favor in the numerous contests in which it has been engaged; but careful historical investigation, as I have already shown, proves the contrary. The condition of the Church during the period of the great councils which we have mentioned was sad, and her prospects of triumph against such a multitude of foes starting up in her midst one after another

in every quarter was, humanly speaking, forlorn indeed. If she had not had a centre of authority in the Chair of Peter at Rome, which was universally recognized, and to which her faithful children filially turned, and from which innovators sought to hide, there could have been no Catholic triumph during this period.

The identity of the Church of this period with that of to-day may be discerned by the following minute comparison of these two periods which Newman makes: "If there is now a form of Christianity such that it extends throughout the world, though in varying measures of prominence or prosperity in separate places; that it lies under the power of sovereigns and magistrates, in various ways alien to its faith; that flourishing nations and great empires, professing or tolerating the Christian name, lie over against it as antagonists; that schools of philosophy and learning are supporting theories, and following out conclusions, hostile to it, and establishing an exegetical system subversive of its Scriptures; that it has lost whole churches by schism, and is now opposed by powerful communions once part of itself; that it has been altogether, or almost, driven from some countries; that in others its line of teachers is overlaid, its flocks oppressed, its Churches occupied, its property held by what

may be called a duplicate succession; that in others its members are degenerate and corrupt, and are surpassed in conscientiousness and in virtue, as in gifts of intellect, by the very heretics whom it condemns; that heresies are rife and bishops negligent within its own pale; and that amid its disorders and its fears there is but one Voice for whose decisions the people wait with trust, one Name and one See to which they look with hope, and that name Peter, and that See Rome; such a religion is not unlike the Christianity of the fifth and sixth centuries."

The various heresies which have from time to time arisen, have had little in common, but have invariably violated the principle upon which the Catholic Church has always rested—the principle of authority. It cannot be doubted that the horror of heresy, the law of obedience and the doctrine of Christian unity were as strong at this period as they ever have been since; hence we see that the opportunity of corruption was as little then as it is to-day.

Moreover, it is as plain and even plainer, that what the Church then anathematized included not only doctrines opposed by Church authority as false and heretical, but also perversions of its precepts and counsels. Faith and morals have been always so united as to constitute a harmoni-

ous Church system, to which every Christian has been required to conform under pain of sin. The Church's decisions have been always insisted upon, her anathemas have never slept, indeed so exclusive has she been, that bigotry and intolerance have been the charges most frequently brought against her by those who have considered indifference to truth and disregard of discipline as marks of the freedom of the Gospel.

Yet to many who do not accept the Catholic rule of faith, the aspect of such a large body of Christians, who find the very essence of religion to be authority, must have great weight. None can deny that this Church alone has visible unity as its essential mark, for authority and unity go together; unity without authority is as impossible as a circle without a centre. Now since unity has for its object simply the universal establishment of those everlasting and unchangeable truths which the Divine Founder of Christianity has given to men, the recognition of it by all lovers of truth is necessary above all things.

This idea is not an idle dream of the imagination, for history proves that it has been realized in the Catholic Church. Cardinal Newman says: "There is more evidence in antiquity for the necessity of unity than for the apostolical succession. . . . Truth is unitive, and has the

power of preserving its identity. Christianity being one," he argues, "all its doctrines are of necessity one, consistent with each other, and form a whole. . . . Its doctrines make up an integral religion." And is it not more difficult to conceive of the Divine Word, sacraments, and gifts of the Holy Ghost as dwelling in a dismembered body than in one that is whole and indivisible? On the other hand, what is more evident than that a Church which teaches false doctrine cannot have such a harmonious creed-system as we find in the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CONVERSION OF THE NATIONS.

From the close of the fourth century to the beginning of the sixth the invasions of the barbarian races were laying the foundations of the nations which form the Europe of to-day. But if the Christian Church at this period had been merely an association of individuals having only the interior guidance of the Holy Ghost, as the numerous sects affirm; or merely national, as Anglicans and the so-called "Old Catholics" would describe her; or simply racial, as the Greeks, Slavs, and others now tend to make her; she certainly never could have brought into her fold in a body the victorious barbarian nations of Europe, which in succeeding centuries were destined to become her great bulwark.

The triumph of Christianity, as history shows, was secured only by the prevalence of Church authority and unity everywhere. To Christian enterprise thus organized the new barbarian peoples only presented fresh fields for successful labor. If the Church had submitted to and sought only to perpetuate the Greek and Roman ideals of political ascendancy in the world, she

would certainly have fallen with those ideals. But because the fundamental principle enunciated by St. Paul, that there is "neither gentile nor Jew, barbarian nor Scythian, but that Christ is all and in all," animated her missionaries, she preached to and baptized men of every race with whom she came in contact. Like the original Apostles of the Christian faith, the great Catholic apostles of nations in no way interfered with but rather sought to strengthen the prevailing allegiances of the various races to their already existing rulers. Clovis and Charlemagne, for instance, gained secular power by their conversion, and at once recognized that obedience to the Church was the surest safeguard of the perpetuity of their dominion; and they readily obtained from the visible Head of the Church even greater support than Constantine and Theodosius had previously received from her, but only on the same conditions. From the beginning the Church, as history plainly shows, has never yielded to the state her God-given right of authority to govern in the spiritual order all of her children, no matter what their civil allegiances might be. She never sought, however, to establish a universal and central civil empire in the world, but on the contrary tried to strengthen and perpetuate separate nationalities wherever she found them. She fur-

thermore restrained and prevented, whenever it was possible, wars between her newly converted peoples, and was so far successful that resistance to the ravages of idolatrous nations soon became to devout Christian rulers the only recognized justification of armed conflicts.

Thus by the influence of the Church the faith of the western pagan world was changed, and Christianity, powerful by her mission and by the unity of her unbroken hierarchy, became the spiritual guardian of new European races, and this position soon forced upon the Holy See the acceptance of temporal sovereignty—the only example in the history of this period, of political independence acquired without the help of arms.

The apostles of nations deserve to rank next to the twelve Apostles in the work which they did for the Church, and their success was due chiefly to their unity with the Holy See by which they established a Christendom well-nigh as universal as the Church herself. Had each nation received in the beginning a distinct Christianity of its own, they separately would no doubt have claimed to have received the Gospel not from the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, but from their individual founders, just as schisms and sects have always looked to their authors as the sources of their life and growth. But the Catholic Church

on the other hand, however widely extended, has only honored her apostles as obedient servants in the work of extending her faith in the world. Religion as a mere department of state, as history shows, has been less able, as a rule, to exercise its power beyond the influence of the government to which it belonged than have any of the secular departments of the same state.

It is obvious that if we appeal to any authority except the one which was given to the Church by its Founder in the beginning, we cannot have an adequate confirmation of the truths given by divine revelation. The theory that Church authority has ever at any time been in abeyance, or has forefeited for any reason whatsoever its right to command, is subversive of the whole idea of the divinely established commission to teach and baptize, which Christ gave to his Apostles. Against this theory there has always stood one body of Christians, older and incomparably more numerous than any of the other Christian bodies separated from it, which has always given a complete answer to the question, Who has the original Apostolic mission to the world?

There is no form of Christianity in the world to-day which antedates the Catholic Church. All other Christian bodies are plainly only dead branches originally broken off from her; hence

there is no one of them which does not stand before her self-condemned. They are full of contradictions of necessary conclusions from essential principles of the original Christian revelation, and consequently by their extension must only tend to subvert the one faith to which they have only a nominal and fictitious title. Schism and sectarianism are, therefore, plainly nothing but hostile forces weakening and pulling down what the Catholic Church has built up.

The history of the Church clearly reveals a centralizing spiritual power greater than has ever been manifested in any other institution that has ever existed in the world, while on the other hand the tendency of national churches and sects has always been to decentralize and proportionately to cripple the influence of whatever semblance of authority they might seem to have. The question whether we can have a world-wide Christianity without an indivisible Catholic Church has been practically answered in history over and over again, yet unfortunately no delusion has seemed in our own day to have acquired more influence than this. The only thing that has prevented the ultimate extinction of the Christian name and faith among those who have broken from Catholic unity, has been the tendency towards reaction to Catholic principles and

practice. Hence we find that conservatism has always been considered by their adherents the surest safeguard of permanence. The so-called orthodox party, in even the most insignificant sects, has usually been dominant as long as they have had any vigor or strength; while the new-departure movements among them have generally denoted the aproach of dissolution. There are two tendencies plainly visible in all non-Catholic Christian bodies throughout the world, one towards the Catholic Church, the other towards infidelity. Who can fail to see that a stable equilibrium between such opposite tendencies in religion is impossible?

On the whole we conclude that the story of the conversion of the nations furnishes the best solution of the religious difficulties by which the various separated Christian bodies are now beset. If we cannot find purity in the spring, it surely does not exist in the streams which flow from it. Corruption denotes change and death; it surely is not an inherent principle of newly given life; hence the faith of our fathers must have been pure or the dead branches which have fallen from it would not be worth holding on to.

There is one thing, however, that all men without distinction of creed must admit; namely, if it were not for the Catholic Church the civili-

zation of the western empire would have been utterly destroyed by our barbarian ancestors. Mr. Gladstone, England's greatest statesman in modern times, thus describes the influence of the Catholic Church in civilizing the world: "She has marched for fifteen hundred years at the head of civilization, and has harnessed to her chariot, as the horses of a triumphal car, the chief intellectual and material forces of the world. Her art is the art of the world; her greatness, glory, grandeur, and majesty have been almost, though not absolutely, all that in these respects the world has had to boast of. Her children are more numerous than all the members of the sects combined, and she is every day enlarging the boundaries of her vast empire. Her altars are raised in every clime, and her missionaries are to be found wherever there are men to be taught the evangel of immortality and souls are to be saved. And this wondrous Church, which is as old as Christianity and as universal as mankind, is today, after twenty centuries of age, as fresh and vigorous and as fruitful as on the day when the Pentecostal fires were showered upon the earth. Surely such an institution challenges the attention and demands and deserves the most serious examination from those outside its pale."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GREEK SCHISM.

The Catholic Church, under the headship of the Popes as successors of St. Peter, has been organized for its administration into dioceses. The dioceses are grouped into metropolitan provinces, over each of which an archbishop presides with a certain limited authority. A further extension of the same rule is the existence of Patriarchates and National rites, which, though only disciplinary authorities established by the rulers of the Church, are nearly as old as herself. In the earliest times there were four bishops recognized as having special authority over all others. The first was the Bishop of Rome who, in addition to his general supreme authority as Head of the Church on earth, was also called special Patriarch of the Nations that spoke Latin at the time. He was, in ecclesiastical language, Bishop of Rome, Patriarch of the West, and Head of the Church. The subordinate Patriarchs were those of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. The languages and liturgy used in each patriarchate were different. In Alexandria the ecclesiastical language was the Egyptian or Coptic,

in Antioch and Jerusalem the Syrian. When Constantine founded a new capital for the Roman Empire on the Bosphorus, that city was made a fifth Patriarchate. The Church language was Greek, then the common language of the Eastern half of the Roman Empire, as Latin was of the Western part. The Patriarchs of Constantinople, though their office was a newer one, soon assumed greater temporal importance than the older Eastern Patriarchs, though acknowledging the supremacy of the Popes. They were generally recognized as the highest in rank among the bishops after the Roman Pontiffs. After the definite separation of the old Roman Empire by the election of the King of Germany and France as Emperor of Rome, in the year 800, the Greek members of the Church grew jealous of the influence of the new Empire with the Roman See. Shortly afterwards the Greek Emperor, Michael III., thought fit to remove St. Ignatius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, from his office by his own authority. He appointed an ambitious relative of his own, Photius, as Patriarch, though the latter was not even in Holy Orders at the time, and he urged Pope Nicholas to confirm the appointment. The Pontiff refused, and Photius and the Emperor then declared that his consent was not needed and practically repudiated his authority, recognized till then. The schism was

closed after the death of Michael, and Photius removed; but natural jealousy of the Greeks against the Latins was not appeased. In the eleventh century another Patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Cerularius, with the support of the Emperor, renounced all connection with the Holy See and even charged the whole body of the Western Christians with heresy. The chief point brought forward as the grounds for this strange accusation was the form of words in which the doctrine of the blessed Trinity had been defined some ages previously by the whole Catholic Church. The words defining the personality of the Holy Spirit as proceeding from both the Divine Father and the Divine Son were, in the judgment of the Greek Church, incorrect. The revolting Patriarch, it should be said, gave sixty other reasons for believing the Latin Church heretical, one being that the Latin priests were not obliged to wear their beards long, and other puerilities of a like kind. The schism was however made, the desire of the Emperors of Constantinople for absolute control of the Church hierarchy within their dominions being its real motive.

It was continued after the deaths of Cerularius and the Emperor on the same motives. The Roman Pontiffs tried repeatedly to bring back the Greeks to communion with the Universal

Church, but in vain. At last, when the Turkish Sultan was at the gates of Constantinople, a reconciliation was effected. A General Council was held at Florence, in the year 1437, at which the representatives of the Greek Catholics were present with those of the rest of the Church. In the name of the Patriarch and the other Greek Bishops they accepted the whole Catholic Creed, including the formula to which Cerularius had given the name of heresy. The supremacy of the Roman See over all the Churches was drawn up in the following terms and signed by all the Greek Bishops at the Council, with one exception: "The Roman Pontiff holds primacy over the whole world, is the successor of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, is the true Vicar of Christ, the Head of the whole Church, the Father and Teacher of all Christians, and to him in Blessed Peter has been given by the Lord Jesus Christ the full power of feeding, ruling, and governing the Universal Church."

A section of the populace at Constantinople refused to accept this action of the heads of the Greek Church, though the Emperor and Patriarch ratified the Union. Within a few years the Turkish Sultan, Mahomet II., stormed and captured the city. He gave a decree of toleration to the Greek inhabitants, and authorized them to choose a patriarch from the schismatically in-

clined clergy. The Sultan ratified the choice, and his successors have since continued to appoint the ecclesiastical head of the Greek Church. The schism has thus been made permanent by the protection of Mahometan rulers as it was begun and carried on by the ambition of Christian Emperors.

Before the secession of the Patriarch of Constantinople from the Catholic Communion, many of the Slavonian race had been converted to the Faith by Greek missionaries. The most important among these were the two saints, Cyril and Methodius, who framed a new Slavonian liturgy for their converts which was aproved by Pope Nicholas. The Russians were among the converts of the Greek missionaries, and received the Slavonian liturgy with dependence in church administration on the Patriarchs of Constantinople under the Pope. They were far separated from Western Europe and followed the orders of the Eastern Patriarchs after the schism in apparent unconsciousness of any change having occurred. The Russian Metropolitan, at the time of the Council of Florence, accepted the decrees as the Greek Bishops did. On his return, however, he was banished by the reigning Tsar who, like the old emperors, wished to keep the control of the clergy in his own hands, and feared it would be lost if he admitted the authority of the Roman

Pontiff. At a later date another Tsar in the sixteenth century purchased from the Patriarch of Constantinople, the erection of a Russian Patriarchate on equal footing with the other Eastern Patriarchates. The Russian Patriarchate continued for little over a century. Then Peter the Great, thinking the office too important to be filled by any subject even of his own nomination, exiled the last patriarch and named a commission, partly of bishops and partly of officials, to exercise the duties of the patriarchal office. The members of this body, known as the Holy Synod, are now named and removed by the Tsar at will. It should be remembered that, though exercising this absolute power over all action of the church in Russia, the Tsar makes no claim to any divine commission for this authority. The Russian Church claims no authority of a religious nature over the Christians outside Russia, either Greeks or members of the other rites. The three Apostolic Patriarchs are recognized as heads of their respective churches as well as the Patriarch of Constantinople. In point of fact the Syrian and Coptic Christians have so dwindled since their separation from the Catholic Church that a patriarch has often scarcely as many spiritual subjects as the bishop of an ordianry diocese. In both countries a large number of those retaining the old rites are as closely united to the

Roman See as any population of the Latin rite. There are Armenian, Syrian, Chaldean, and Coptic patriarchs in union with the Pope as well as the schismatic bearers of the same name. The Ruthenian Catholics of Poland use the same Slavonic ritual as the Russian schismatics, and though they have no patriarch their bishops and archbishops are independent of the Latin bishops in the same place. This illustrates how little the Roman Pontiffs are inclined to meddle with national usages so far as they are not opposed to the essential unity of belief and spiritual obedience to the Catholic Church.

The Russian law forbids any person, once officially enrolled as a member of the State Church, from leaving its communion, and several millions of Ruthenian Catholics have, during the nineteenth century, been classed as members of the State Church and forbidden to hold any intercourse with the Pope. Russia, however, is full of sects of various kinds who actually reject the religious authority of the Established Church. Indeed several of the most prominent Russian writers state, that if religious liberty were tolerated in Russia half the peasants would become dissenters from the national church. The religious discussions which have recently been raised by a number of distinguished men in the Russian Church show that they are troubled with

doubts and perplexities in regard to the alleged orthodoxy of their Church, and many are looking to Rome for their solution.

Undoubtedly among those vast numbers of schismatics born and reared in the Greek Church, who have in common with Catholics the use of the Sacraments, there are many souls pleasing to God. It is a fact, however, that since their separation from Catholic unity they have had scarcely any men or women among them whom they have thought worthy to be honored as they honor the saints of the earlier ages. And as every one knows, a relaxation of discipline, never tolerated by the Catholic Church, prevails among them unrebuked. Nor is this to be wondered at, because a church authority which is wholly subject to the state cannot act freely, for if the Tsar and his ministers control the spiritual authorities there is no remedy if they do wrong; the Russian Church has consequently been forced by her position to adopt a condition of spiritual stagnation. Its teachers admit, in principle, that Christ gave the Church the right to pronounce decisions on doctrine, but they can have recourse for such decisions only to the first seven General Councils; as if all points of dogma and morals had been fixed in those seven, and no other questions could arise to the end of time. There

is no greater inconsistency to be found anywhere among the countless Protestant sects than among the Russians on this question of the authority of Ecumenical Councils; surely if the Church cannot to-day exercise the same authority which she exercised in the early centuries, the promise of Christ to her has failed.

Again, the Catholic Church has achieved greater spiritual triumphs during the thousand years since the schism began than during her whole previous history. The middle ages are unquestionably the time when she exercised more power over the minds and hearts of men than she has during the previous and subsequent periods of her history; and if, as the Greeks claim, her authority ceased at the time of their separation from her, a usurped authority in the Roman Church has accomplished more for the salvation and sanctification of souls than was accomplished by the legitimate authority of previous or subsequent ages. According to this theory the Gospel, during the greater part of its history, has been propagated chiefly by a clergy usurping authority from God. If such were the fact the religion of Christ, instead of being the most beneficent influence in the world, would be the worst religious despotism that has ever existed.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MIDDLE AGES.

Never has the Church more fully manifested her power over the minds and hearts of men than during the centuries, from the eighth to the fifteenth, the time of history known as the Middle Ages. The conditions for spiritual domination were then so unfavorable, that this authority of itself shows that the Church possesses the most civilizing and enlightening influence ever known in the world. The races of men inhabiting the greater part of Europe, at the beginning of this period, were mostly newly converted barbarians whose old ideals were as nearly opposite those of the Catholic Church as can well be imagined. Physical prowess, contempt for the refinement of manners handed down by the old Roman civilization, indifference to the value of philosophy and letters, and even to the common arts by which civilized life is normally supported, were the chief characteristics which distinguished them from the older degenerate but cultivated peoples whom they had pillaged, whose industries they had destroyed, and whom by sheer force of num-

bers they finally vanquished after centuries of struggle.

The whole history of civilization shows that even the most ideal civil governments are but houses of cards in the face of overwhelming hostile armies. Accordingly we may conclude that a purely religious society which could survive and gain greater strength out of the ruin of the very human resources upon which it had previously depended must have had a supernatural life. Mere human knowledge is also as perishable as the temples in which it is enshrined. The record of the great ideas of Aristotle, of Plato, and of Socrates, could have been as easily obliterated from the memory of mankind as has been the wisdom of the countless sages who once lived in cities about which we now know but the names, and whose very sites are a matter of conjecture. According to the natural course of events when civilized and barbarian races clash, and the latter conquer by mere physical force, it means extinction to the vanquished. One institution alone in this world—the Catholic Church —has been able to prevent such destruction, to fuse the most discordant elements in human society, and to preserve the thoughts and achievements of her saints and doctors of every race for all time.

Considering the obstacles to be overcome, it is the wonder of wonders that the Catholic Church Christianized western Europe as she did. In view of this, we may say that the so-called dark ages were in reality the most progressive epochs in all human history. Those missionaries who seem to us now to have been so slow, tolerant, and patient, actually accomplished by faith a task which to men without it would have been an impossibility. Individuals, as the scant records of this period show, were instructed, persuaded, and led into a new and supernatural life, one by one, as laboriously as if the whole universe had been created solely for each one's personal benefit, until in the end every soul in the vast region which the messengers of the Gospel penetrated actually knew and acknowledged the divine message as true. If it be hard work for a modern parish priest to keep the people committed to his charge safe in the fold, and to add to his flock as many by conversion as he continually loses by the effects of human passions and weakness, what must have been the spiritual power of those who won to the faith so many diverse peoples during this period?

Yet the very means by which it was accomplished—unity with the Papacy—is to-day often represented as the result of the ever-increasing

tyranny of the See of Rome. According to this strange explanation of Christian development, the more individual authority the scattered missionaries acquired over their new converts, the more readily they surrendered their own ancient independence to the Pope. This absurd reasoning is an illustration of how, unconsciously, prejudiced minds mock themselves when they try to explain by human causes the triumph of the Catholic Church over the power of the world.

One of the most marked features of European public life, in the early middle ages, was the desire of all classes—nobles, citizens, and populations—to be independent practically of their nominal national sovereigns. The dominions of Charlemagne, after that monarch's death, split up into an endless number of duchies, margravates, counties, baronies, and free cities, each of which struggled to make itself practically independent. Is it credible on merely human motives that ecclesiastics alone among their countrymen should have no share in the popular feeling in this regard? When every duke and baron was trying with might and main to make his dependence on the Emperor or the King of France merely a nominal one, why should the German and French bishops develop such an irresistible tendency to submission as to exalt the

Papal authority over themselves beyond its original powers? The name of Rome as a political power was used by Charlemagne to give permanent unity to his new Empire. It failed to do so politically. Is it common sense to think that the mere name of the half-ruined city should have such sway over men in the spiritual order of thought as to make them at the same time give to its Bishop a greater authority than he had possessed while Rome was the Capital of the Christian civilized world under Emperors like Constantine and Theodosius? The idea is absurd if men are supposed to be guided exclusively by human passions, interests, or theories. It needed a divine power to impose the bond of Church unity under the headship of the Roman Pontiffs on so discordant a mass as the Europe of the Middle Ages.

The modern advocates of state supremacy in every branch of human life often lay heavy censure on the authority claimed in the Middle Ages by the Popes to decide questions of international and state policy on moral principles, distinct from those of material force or interests. To a reasonable mind the fact that unarmed Pontiffs could sit in judgment effectively over Kings, Emperors, and temporal governments as representatives of the Almighty and interpreters

of His laws of human justice, is an astounding one. It could only be a fact because the public conscience of the great majority recognized its justice and authority. Moreover, the Popes most conspicuous in the contests of this nature that arose, nearly all had to give judgment against the powerful of the earth and in favor of the weak. Their own temporal interests could never have suggested such a line of action. Gregory VII. or Hildebrand, gives the most striking instance of this disinterested use of spiritual authority for the benefit of public morality. He reformed the discipline of the Church against the relaxations that had crept in through the weakness of individuals and, with ceaseless struggles, against time-serving and unworthy bishops and ecclesiastics. At the same time he defended the liberty of the Church and its pastors against the most powerful monarch of the day. Henry the Fourth, of Germany, tried to depose the fearless Pontiff, and marched his armies into Italy for that end; they failed and the Emperor himself, by an extraordinary chain of circumstances, felt it necessary to seek reconciliation with the Pope and outwardly humbled himself before his authority at Canossa. Though the principles upheld by Gregory thus triumphed, and the victory bore good fruit for future ages,

the submission of Henry brought no personal gain to the individual Pontiff. He was again driven from Rome by hostile princes and died in a distant city with the words on his lips: "I have loved justice and hated iniquity, therefore I die in exile." The judgment of Gregory on his work and its results to himself was not one to excite others to follow in his footsteps on temporal motives. It was followed, however, by his successors in the Papacy. The spiritual authority of the Papacy was neither framed through worldly ambition nor upheld by worldly resources during the Middle Ages.

The great German historian, Ranke, although not a Catholic, has proved this to be a historical fact; and how could it possibly be otherwise? A spiritual and unworldly authority, which has continually arrayed itself against human passion, could never have endured through all the political and social upheavals which have since taken place in the world if not upheld by saints. The Church of the Middle Ages, if it be judged by its fruits, is as manifestly supernatural and divine as the Church of the first age itself, and this is enough to prove conclusively that it is identical with the Apostolic Church. Indeed the whole history of Christianity shows that the perpetuity of the Apostolic Church is the only

ever-present guarantee of its claim to be Divine. If the Church had been otherwise constituted, no reasonable man who has studied history can suppose that the teaching of Jesus Christ would now be known or would have any practical influence on the world to-day. Instead therefore of thinking that, if it be Divine, it ought to have had greater influence among men than it actually has, and to have been more widely extended in the world than it has been, we ought rather to wonder that a religion so opposed to the corrupt inclinations of human nature could ever have succeeded so well as it has.

Its history only verifies the prophecy of its founder that it would always be hated by the world, and that, although the gates of hell would never prevail against it, on the last day the faithful would be so few, that on His coming He would say: "But yet the Son of Man, when He cometh, shall He find, think you, faith on the earth?" (St. Luke xviii. 8). He also tells us that "Many are called, but few are chosen" (St. Matt. xx. 16). "Enter ye in at the narrow gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life;

and few there are that find it" (St. Matt. vii. 13-14). Had the history of the Church been different, and its triumph complete, these words of its Founder would have been unfulfilled. As it is, therefore, we conclude that the occurrence of all the evils which have happened in the world, both within and without the Church, are only so many evidences of the truth which she teaches.

CHAPTER XVI.

POPE AND COUNCILS.

The relation of Papal authority to that of General Councils is so intimately connected with the doctrines of the unity and indefectibility of the Catholic Church that we cannot clearly understand the latter without ascertaining where the seat of infallibility is. As history shows, definitions of faith and morals have for the most part been declared by Councils, of which the Catholic Church holds twenty to have been General. What is the mark which distinguishes these from other Church Councils of greater or less importance?

As the word General implies, these Councils represent in some way the expressed consensus of the whole Catholic Church and we now propose to examine why they have this title, and why their authority is co-extensive with that of the Church. If this question were to be decided without reference to history, we might perhaps infer that they are authoritative because the majority of the bishops of the whole Church were present at them; but we find that this test fails,

since some of the most important General Councils were attended by comparatively few bishops of Christendom, and they, too, represented only a section of the Church. The second General Council (I. Constantinople), for instance, was composed of only one hundred and fifty Fathers, all of whom were Orientals, whereas a Council of Carthage, at which St. Augustine was present, was composed of over five hundred bishops, and was summoned by an Emperor, and yet is not ranked as Ecumenical.

The acceptance by the greater portion of the Church of the decrees of a Council also cannot be the test of its authority, since decrees of some Ecumenical Councils were rejected for a long time by many bishops, and were accepted only after confirmation by the Pope, as those of the Fifth General Council held at Constantinople in the year 553. We must conclude there is some other mark by which these twenty Councils, each and all, and not others, are denoted by the Church as Ecumenical. History shows that there is only one such mark which can be unmistakably applied, and that is, the approval of the Holy See.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the question of the respective authority of the Pope and of General Councils, was much dis-

cussed. Many theologians claimed that General Councils had authority even over the Popes; and some times appeals were ventured from the decisions of the Pope to future General Councils, but always without avail. In point of fact no Council, recognized as Ecumenical, has ever sat in judgment upon the authoritative decisions of the Holy See. The latest, the Vatican Council, called by Pius IX. and composed of nearly eight hundred bishops, declared that the Roman Pontiff, when he defines *ex cathedra* a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the Universal Church, possesses that infallibility which the Divine Redeemer gave to His Church. When this decree was promulgated it was accepted more promptly and universally by Catholics than the decrees of any other Council.

This decision shows clearly that the authority of the Catholic Church is founded upon the power which Christ gave to St. Peter and his successors for all time, and that *ex cathedra* definitions of faith and morals by the Roman Pontiff are, as the Vatican Council teaches, "irreformable of themselves and not from the consent of the Church."

As no Catholic doctrine has excited more interest or comment in our own day than Papal infallibility, we shall set forth the teach-

ing of Holy Scripture, as interpreted by the Church, concerning the prerogatives which Christ gave to the Prince of the Apostles. When St. Peter had declared his faith in our Lord's Divinity, Jesus said to him: "And I say to thee: Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (St. Matt. xvi. 18-19). These words show that the Founder of Christianity was Himself the builder of the Church, they also show that His Church is a concrete, visible, human society centred upon the office of the Apostle to whom were given the "keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." Any interpretation of them which would make a mere abstract idea, such as St. Peter's confession, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God" (St. Matt. xvi. 16), the foundation of the Church of which Christ is speaking, would render meaningless the giving the power of the keys to St. Peter. Augustine and Chrysostom certainly added this mystical meaning to the word *rock*, St. Peter's name, but they at the same time literally interpreted it as meaning that the visible Church was founded on

St. Peter himself, as the words addressed by St. Augustine to the Donatists, show: "Number the bishops even from the very Chair of Peter. . . . that is the rock against which the proud gates of hell prevail not." Elsewhere he declares that "Peter by reason of Primacy of the Apostolate represented the Church," that "Christ made (Peter) one with Himself, committing His sheep to him as to another self," and he adds that he was himself "held in the Catholic Church by the succession of the bishops from Peter."

St. Chrysostom also does not separate the confession of St. Peter from his office, for he says; "He who built the Church on the confession of Peter . . . He who gave to him the keys of the Kingdom of heaven spoke with authority; I will build my church on thee and give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven." When the above passage of St. Matthew is compared with the following from St. John: "And Jesus looking upon him said: Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter" (St. John i. 42), the meaning of this change of name appears most clearly. When taken in connection with these words of St. John how significant is St. Luke's account of our Lord's words concerning St. Peter's office: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have

you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for *thee,* that *thy* faith fail not; and do thou confirm thy brethren" (St. Luke xxii. 31-32).

Again St. John's account of the triple charge: "Feed My lambs. . . . Feed My sheep," given by our Lord to St. Peter and coupled with the words: "Lovest thou me more than these?" when associated with the passages concerning St. Peter already quoted argue mightily for the Catholic doctrine of Papal Infallibility. The fact that St. Matthew, in enumerating the Apostles, calls St. Peter the first, although he was not the first to be called to the Apostolate, nor the oldest of the Apostles; also that St. Peter is repeatedly singled out from the other Apostles by the sacred writers in such phrases as: "Peter and they that were with him"; "Go tell My disciples and Peter"; and finally the prominence of St. Peter in the Church, as described in the Acts of the Apostles, make the evidence of Holy Scripture for this Catholic teaching conclusive.

Finally the history of the Church shows clearly the truth of her interpretation of these passages of Holy Scripture. The fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies by the Coming of Christ is not more certain than that these words spoken by Jesus Christ to St. Peter have been actually veri-

fied in history. To-day we behold in the living authority of the Successor of St. Peter an indubitable fulfilment of these prophecies which Christ spoke concerning the stability of His Church; and to the vast majority of Christians this is the most convincing evidence of the Divinity of its Founder. The greatest of all the historical tests of its truth, is that there are no two *ex cathedra* definitions of the Catholic Church during its whole history which are contradictory. Nowhere else do we find such consistency as this, hence we are forced to believe all that the Catholic Church teaches.

GENERAL COUNCILS.

Number.	Name.	Date.	No. of Fathers present.	Presided over by:
I.	NICAEA.	A. D. 325	318	Papal Legates.
II.	I. CONSTANTINOPLE.	A. D. 381	150	Papal Legates.
III.	EPHESUS.	A. D. 431	200	Papal Legates.
IV.	CHALCEDON.	A. D. 451	600	Papal Legates.
V.	II. CONSTANTINOPLE.	A. D. 553	150	Bp. Eutychius. Became Ecumenical by approval of the Holy See.
VI.	III. CONSTANTINOPLE.	A. D. 680	174 (Mostly Orientals)	Papal Legates.
VII.	II. NICAEA.	A. D 787	350	Papal Legates.
VIII.	IV. CONSTANTINOPLE.	A. D. 869	109	Papal Legates.
IX.	I. LATERAN.	A. D. 1123	300	Pope Calixtus II.
X.	II. LATERAN.	A. D. 1139	1000	Pope Innocent II.
XI.	III. LATERAN.	A. D. 1179	300	Pope Alexander III.
XII.	IV. LATERAN.	A. D. 1212	1200	Pope Innocent III.
XIII.	I. LYONS.	A. D. 1245	140	Pope Innocent IV.
XIV.	II. LYONS.	A. D. 1274	500 (and 1000 Abbots)	Pope Gregory X.
XV.	VIENNE.	A. D. 1312	114	Pope Clement V.
XVI.	CONSTANCE.	A. D. 1414	312	Pope John XXIII.
XVII.	FLORENCE.	A. D. 1438	141	Pope Eugenius IV.
XVIII.	V. LATERAN.	A. D. 1512	135	Popes Julius II and Leo X.
XIX.	TRENT.	A. D. 1545	205	Papal Legates.
XX.	VATICAN.	A. D. 1869	769	Pope Pius IX.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE REFORMATION.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the secular spirit gained such ascendancy in Europe that it paved the way for the religious revolution which, in the sixteenth century, severed whole nations from the Catholic Church.

Great as are the benefits which civilization has conferred upon mankind, its history nevertheless shows that its progress has always been marred by a moral and spiritual degeneracy which has led to great disasters. The decline of ancient Israel dates from the close of the reign of "Solomon in all his glory." The splendor of the age of Pericles was short-lived, and the Augustan age was too brief for mankind to retain and perpetuate its benefits. The Renaissance likewise developed the same evils which had caused the decline of the peace and prosperity built up by the ancient civilization. The study of the ancient classic Latin and Greek literature brought back the sensuous ideals of their authors; the development of the arts and sciences engendered a love of ease and pleasure hitherto unknown; and the

increase of the secular power proportionately weakened the spiritual authority of the Church.

Religion and worldliness cannot flourish together, because moral reformation is what the former always demands, and emancipation from moral restraint is what the latter always craves. Under such conditions it became impossible in the sixteenth century for the Church to carry on her divine mission without the purification of herself in all her members, and the elimination of the scandals and abuses which served as a pretext for disobedience to her teachings and disregard for her precepts. For a long time the project of a General Council had been the remedy proposed by the authorities, but the difficulties in the way of reconciling and uniting discordant parties in Church and State had thus far prevented it from being applied. Meanwhile some of the most venerated doctrines of the Church were being assailed and her discipline and authority despised.

However, the traditional hatred of heresy was so strong, and the past success of the Church in preserving visible unity in Europe had been so great that the possibility of actual schism was not thought of. Indeed it was not supposed by Leo X. that the civil rulers of Europe would permit such a thing. He simply regarded the religious uprising in Germany as an ebullition of

fanaticism which would soon die out. Events showed how little he understood the gravity of the situation. The condemnation and excommunication of the leader of this new movement only incited him to greater desperation, and rather increased than diminished his following. Other seemingly more important matters engrossed the attention of Leo X., who died suddenly amidst the greatest worldly applause, without the opportunity of receiving the last sacraments, at the age of forty-four.

It was while the cardinals were assembled in conclave to elect his successor that the real dangers which threatened the Church were first understood, and after listening to the fervid reform speeches of two of their number, they gave their suffrages for a pious recluse, Adrian Florent, the son of a Utrecht weaver, who was esteemed by the few who knew him simply as a student and a saint, and it is said that "they were well-nigh dead with fright" at their lack of worldly prudence when they afterwards considered what they had done. Yet, as Ranke says, "the choice of the conclave could scarcely have fallen upon a worthier man," for the changes which he inaugurated in his short reign of one year were but the beginning of a complete reformation in the Church.

Just twenty-two years after his death Paul

III. was able to convoke one of the most remarkable Ecumenical Councils ever held by the Church. The doctrinal and disciplinary decrees of the Council of Trent manifest a degree of theological learning and apostolic zeal unsurpassed by any age. The truths defined by it are so luminous, and its discipline is so prudent and far-reaching, that if their promulgation and enforcement had not been resisted by the powerful and unscrupulous kings and princes who had seized upon the opportunity afforded by spiritual revolt for the attainment of worldly power, there can be no doubt but what the Catholic faith, as in times past, would soon have won back the distracted peoples whose churches had been sacked and whose institutions of charity robbed of their revenues for the enrichment of kings and courtiers. Pious funds donated during previous ages by heroic self-sacrificing souls, were on the hypocritical plea of Church reform taken from the poor for the aggrandizement of the fortunes of princes and ministers of state and used for the gratification of their basest passions. Under such circumstances neither Church nor State could prosper, for the discord produced by doubt, and the consequent relaxation of morals, caused the most terrible hostilities ever known and the most bloody and protracted wars in all Christian

history, and these things have borne their fruit even to our own day.

In the Council of Trent, as its history shows, the Catholic Church sought first of all to compel purity of faith and life among her own members; hence questions of faith and of discipline were treated by it together. By its dogmatic definitions it confirmed the faithful in their adherence to the Catholic faith and provided the means for instructing them in its doctrines. By its disciplinary laws it also produced a genuine reformation among all classes of people and aroused new life and zeal in the service of God.

Its efforts to bring back those who had separated from the Church were not successful, yet its condemnation of their errors proved to be the greatest barrier to their further progress. The line of demarcation between Catholics and Protestants now became fixed, and Catholics became united in their efforts to preserve the faith in its integrity, and to extend it among heretical and pagan nations. The day for compromise had passed, and the Protestants had only the weak resources of private judgment, and the civil powers by which they had previously been supported, to fall back upon.

They succeeded only in establishing weak national churches in those countries where they

had obtained a foothold, for new sects arose among them continually, so that it became impossible to enforce any uniformity in faith or practice. Religion with them has since been such a cause of dissension and tumult that peace-loving citizens have finally become indifferent towards it. The creeds over which their ancestors fought so bitterly have now been practically abandoned by the great majority of the people, and the only justification for the so-called Reformation now offered by non-Catholic historians is that it prepared the way for modern free thought and liberated men from what they choose to call the tyranny of dogmatism.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE.

History shows that the Catholic Church from the day that she was founded has constantly sought to fulfil the commission entrusted to her by her Divine Founder: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (St. Mark xvi. 15), and that whatever influence she has exerted over men has been for the accomplishment of this great object. She has so consistently delivered her message to men without distinction of race, color, or rank, that if she has shown any preference in this regard it has been for the poor and unfortunate members of the human family rather than for the rich and powerful of the earth.

The forms which civil society has taken during the life of the Church have been determined by human causes over which she has not had control. She has only insisted that obedience be rendered "to the powers that be which are ordained of God," and has shown no preference for one form of government over others, while always striving to prevent oppression and injustice under all. Her interdicts upon Christian

nations which engaged in unjust wars, and her excommunication of rulers for exorbitant taxation of their subjects, often cured or lessened evils which cannot be remedied in our own day. But her voice is not silent now. Apropos of the present tribulations and miseries caused by the hostility between capital and labor, our late Holy Father, Leo XIII., has published an Encyclical on "The Condition of the Working Classes," which offers the most satisfactory solution of this difficult problem that has yet appeared.

Upon what does our happiness in this world depend so much as upon the right adjustment of the social relations of all classes of men? As Leo XIII. says: "The very notion of civilization is a fiction of the imagination, if it rests not on the abiding principles of truth and the unchanging laws of virtue and justice, and if unfeigned love knits not together the wills of men and gently controls the interchange and the character of their mutual services."

If the Church has been able, through the Gospel, to carry civilization to the most degraded savages, and transform them into peaceable and industrious peoples; if she has abolished the curse of slavery left by the old corrupt civilization of paganism, and has given to us the accumulated wisdom of past ages which but for her would

have been destroyed, may we not conclude that her mission is divine and that her laws are a safe rule of human conduct? Her wisdom inspired the establishment of the great universities and schools with which Europe is filled to-day. She has done more to promote the arts and sciences than all the civil institutions of the world. God, says Holy Scripture, "made the nations of the earth for health; and there is no poison of destruction in them, nor kingdom of hell upon the earth" (Wisdom i. 14). Hence we must believe that He founded the Church for the welfare of nations.

Would that this beneficent authority had never been set aside, for then the civil power would never have lost the respect of the people, nor would so many wars have been fomented to blight the earth with desolation and death. Nor again would multitudes have become so demoralized by idleness and disobedience to law that in these days of plenty the land is filled with homeless vagabonds not willing to labor and not ashamed to beg. Poverty then would not be associated, as it often is, with our boasted progress which, if it be a blessing, should make the conditions of all men more happy and prosperous.

What are the foundations upon which civil society is built? Philosophy and history teach us

that the social bond, like that of the family, has for its object not only the material welfare of its members but also their moral improvement which enters essentially into every human act; and therefore it necessarily supposes the higher and more sacred bond of religion by which all are united to their Creator and to one another. And it furthermore establishes order in the various acts and occupations of men.

We conclude then that religion is necessary for man's social well-being because it is the foundation of his moral conviction and conduct, upon which the stability of human society depends. This truth is practically shown by the results which have followed from the loss of religious faith by great multitudes in our own day who seek to overthrow all government, attack the rights of property, and through their pretended solicitude for the needs of the idle and vicious members of society would seize upon and so distribute property that they might share equally in what others have acquired by personal industry and economy. The spread of these doctrines now threatens society so seriously that there is danger that rulers who are powerful enough and are not actuated by motives of religion may mercilessly resort to sheer physical force for the suppression of social discontent. Such a result followed the conquests of

the old Roman Republic, when its rule extended itself over the ancient civilized world.

Those who exercise civil authority, or those who have justly acquired private property, will never willingly give up their rights; and if socialists or anarchists ever become powerful enough to temporarily overthrow and dispossess the law-abiding portion of society, order will probably never be restored without the revival of absolutism in government. Revolutionary periods have been the most disastrous in history; worse than this, they usually have followed one another at short intervals, because the vanquished have always watched for the first opportunity for redress, and made a lasting peace impossible. But on the other hand religion, as history shows, by disposing and requiring men to honor and obey the legitimate existing civil authority in all things not contrary to the law of God, has proved to be the surest means for maintaining among men the God-given rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

If the ideas of moral responsibility and obligation which religion has always inculcated in the minds and consciences of men were wholly obliterated, society could not be held together. The Author of nature must, therefore, also be the Author of society and religion, and the great

social problem of this age, as it has been of every other, must be to establish harmony between them. This ideal never has been fully realized, and never will be. Practically, therefore, it is the duty of every man, whatever may be his station in life, to be guided by them. The world has had reformers, as it has had statesmen and discoverers, but the chief business of all the real reformers who have ever lived has been self-reformation. If every man would reform himself there would be no need of so-called reformers. But as long as there are those who reverse the right order by setting themselves up as reformers of others, instead of themselves, very little good will be accomplished. "Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation; and to keep one's self unspotted from this world" (St. James i. 27).

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